

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected the application on various bases. In response thereto, Applicant has amended the application so as to overcome the rejections raised by the Examiner. Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance at the present time.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 4 through 9 and 11 would be deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form. As such, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include claims 3 and 4. Additionally, Applicant has amended claim 5 so as to incorporate prior claim 1 and claim 11 to incorporate prior claim 1. Further, the Examiner has indicated that claims 22 through 25 are allowable. Applicant has changed the dependency of claims 26 and 27 so as to depend ultimately from claim 22. As such claims 1, 2, 5, 8-15, and 19-27 should be deemed allowable at the present time.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 10, 12 and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102 based on the contention that they are anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,085,654 issued to Gunschera et al (the '654 patent). The Examiner has rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §103 based on the contention that it is unpatentable over the '654 patent. The Examiner has rejected claims 13-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103 based on the contention that it is unpatentable over the '654 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,964,155 issued to Platsche (the '155 patent).

Without addressing the veracity of the Examiner's rejections, and while Applicant has discussed same with the Examiner on multiple occasions by way of interview, Applicant submits that the above-identified amendments overcome the rejections of the Examiner. Applicant reserves its rights to pursue further continuation applications as deemed necessary. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1, 2, 5, 8-15, and 19-27 should be deemed allowable at the present time.

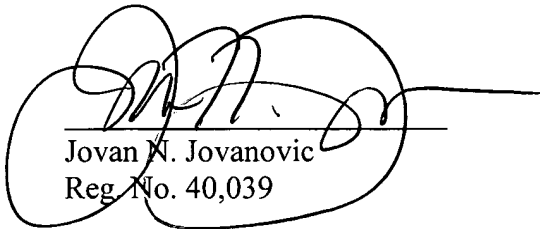
Inasmuch as Applicant has added one additional independent claim, an appropriate additional claims fee is included herewith.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the invention is presently in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and substantive examination is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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